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754 least in the usual sense of the word. The blacks generally speak about "hags"—beings who have all the powers ascribed to witches and a great 754 deal more. A hag is the disembodied spirit of an old woman who prac- 774 tices witchcraft. She is able to slip off her skin at night and roam about, under the earth, on the earth or above the earth, without anyone being able to see her. A person without skin is always invisible, but it is possible to feel them.

When darkness sets in, the hag who has been in the body during daylight hours, frees herself from the flesh, and proceeds to pursue her dread calling—that of "riding" persons against whom she has spite, or plaguing individuals she has been paid to worry. She is able to slip through the smallest cracks of your house while you sleep. She deposits her skin in the chimney corner. On your back, she pummels you to exhaustion, then sucks your blood. Upon leaving, she cries, "Kin, Kin, you know me," until the skin has fitted itself to the hag's body.

Anybody with common sense knows when he is being ridden by a hag. [828] First he will have unpleasant dreams and every night they become more alarming. Insomnia is a sure sign, as is worrying at night. If the hag is not called off the person will lose his mind.

A hag will ride your enemy for a small pittance.[d]

Supernatural Beliefs

• 77 "The Negroes who live down on the salt in the Sea Island region of South Carolina are firm believers in a motley variety of supernatural beings. To them the earth is filled with ghosts, plat-eyes, boo-daddies, boo-hags, drolls and spirit animals. Only the educated Negroes who have [369] contact with the big cities of America deny the existence of these outer-world creatures. The rest of the Sea Island blacks are steeped in the same superstitions that their forefathers held in Africa."

795 *Ghosts*—A ghost is very real thing to the Negroes of Edisto and Wadmalaw Islands. A ghost, the materialized body of one who is dead, may be said to have the same dignity as a human being as far as its existence is concerned. The Gullahs say that they know exactly where ghosts could